

Final Reading still trying to attach a committee amendment. The committee amendment in the bill, if you would open your bill books, talks about the imposition of an interim rate increase. The way the bill was originally drafted, we struck the term "such rate increase" and used the term "an interim rate increase". The problem with that is we really don't know what an interim rate increase is as it is stated in the bill. It also I am afraid might open the possibility of a gas company, after it files with a city for a rate increase, implementing something other than that rate increase that it implemented. If we go back to the original language, strike the term "an interim", which is not defined, go back to the term "such rate increase", that will guarantee that the time the gas company request to implement a gas increase, that if the city let's the 90 days expire and the gas company wants to implement some sort of an increase, that it will be that increase which they requested. The term "such" will apply back to the original rate that they requested. I think if the bill, 494, is to pass basically in its current form, it needs this amendment. It would be my preference that we take a little more time on this because honestly the folks are very close to coming into an agreement on how these various terms shall be defined. For instance, we need to define the term "purchased gas". It is not defined in the bill. What does that mean? It varies from a retail gas company that is owned by the wholesaler, one that has an affiliated relationship with the wholesaler, one that is publicly owned. All of those things are different. Also it doesn't spell out in the bill the gas company's right to implement a pass through. Most people will agree that if a pass through is requested by the city that they should be able to automatically pass it through. The only thing that cities are able to regulate are the operational types of expenses. Most people agree with that but that is not spelled out in the bill either. We really need more work on this bill and I really apologize to Senator Abboud, who I know has worked hard on this bill and is very sincere in bringing it in, and I know he is a little frustrated that we are attempting to bring it back at this point, and I apologize for that. I am sorry that he hasn't been as apprised of what is going on with this as much as he should have been but the Urban Affairs Committee has worked quite hard on this issue of municipal regulation of natural gas rates. We, as a committee, are very close to having something to bring to the Legislature that hopefully will resolve this issue for